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Press Release

**Twenty-Fourth Annual Meeting
Bar Harbor, Maine, USA
June 4-8, 2007**

**North Atlantic Nations Take Crucial Steps
For Conservation of Wild Atlantic Salmon**

The North Atlantic Salmon Conservation Organization (NASCO) concluded its 24th Annual Meeting in Bar Harbor, Maine, USA, on June 8, 2007, and succeeded in taking vital steps towards enhancing transparency and accountability of Nations in the conservation and recovery of Atlantic salmon. NASCO is continuing a process begun in 2004 to strengthen the Organization. All Nations will present final plans by November 1 on how they will implement measures to manage salmon fisheries, protect critical salmon habitat, and control the impacts of salmon aquaculture and related activities on wild Atlantic salmon populations. Importantly, the new plans will make it easier to measure how well NASCO's Parties are doing in meeting their obligations in future years.

“The development of Implementation Plans by NASCO's Parties is of critical importance for ensuring the protection of Atlantic salmon. They establish a roadmap and benchmarks for how each country is meeting its international obligations. NASCO and its Parties should be extremely proud of this achievement. I believe what we have done is unprecedented in the world of regional fisheries management organizations,” said Dr. Ken Whelan, President of NASCO.

Significant new commitments were also made by NASCO's Parties to an international research program, SALSEA (Salmon at Sea), that is investigating the reasons for high mortality of Atlantic salmon during their sea phase. Canada will provide an additional contribution of \$100,000 for the work of the International Atlantic Salmon Research Board, the co-ordinating body for salmon research at sea. More new funding is being sought from European sources and the Atlantic salmon sampling program in West Greenland has been expanded. In addition, work is continuing on the coordinated research program in the Northwest Atlantic.

“Finding out why Atlantic salmon are not surviving their sea journey to return to home rivers for spawning is a huge task that cannot be accomplished by one country alone. I am very proud of the leadership NASCO is showing in this critically important area,” stressed Dr. Whelan.

Another key action taken this week was the agreement to continue the closure of the commercial fishery at West Greenland, which harvests salmon originating from North America and southern Europe. Under a multi-annual agreement, the fishery will be limited to internal consumption, which is estimated to be about 20 tonnes. The Faroe Islands mixed stock fishery will continue to be managed in a precautionary manner in accordance with scientific advice. No fishery has occurred in the Faroe Islands in recent years.

Salmon travel incredible distances, starting in their natal streams in North America and Europe and ending up in the waters off Greenland and the Faroe Islands. It is here where they feed and grow before returning to home rivers to spawn—starting the incredible lifecycle of this magnificent species over again. Dr. Whelan noted that the threats to Atlantic salmon are considerable and NASCO and its Parties are taking their responsibilities to control mixed stock fisheries and reduce threats to Atlantic salmon very seriously.

Notes for editors

NASCO is an intergovernmental organization formed to promote the conservation, restoration, enhancement, and rational management of salmon stocks in the North Atlantic Ocean. The Twenty-Fourth Annual Meeting of NASCO was held in Bar Harbor, Maine, USA, from June 4-8, 2007. NASCO’s members are Canada, Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland), the European Union (which currently has 27 Member States), Iceland, Norway, the Russian Federation, and the United States of America. Representatives from 21 non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and 3 inter-governmental organizations (IGOs) also attended the meeting.

The report of the 2007 NASCO Annual Meeting with annexes and other information on Atlantic salmon and the Organization will be made available on the NASCO website: www.nasco.int.

The next Annual Meeting of NASCO will be held from 2 to 6 June 2008 in Spain.

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